

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Mr. Sullivan

DATE: 7/16/65

FROM : F. J. Baumgardner

SUBJECT: COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN RACIAL MATTERS
ALABAMA LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION TO PRESERVE THE PEACE

1 - Mr. Belmont 1 - Mr. Sullivan
1 - Mr. Mohr 1 - Mr. Bland
1 - Mr. DeLoach 1 - Mr. Baumgardner
1 - Mr. Rosen 1 - Mr. Phillips

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Belmont _____
Mohr _____
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By memorandum 7/13/65, the Attorney General forwarded the Director a copy of the undated Biennial Report to the Alabama Legislature by the Alabama Legislative Commission to Preserve the Peace. The Attorney General noted "I would be interested in any comments you might have regarding this report." An envelope attached indicates that the Report was sent to the Attorney General by the Alabama Legislative Commission.

BACKGROUND CONCERNING THE REPORT:

Memorandum from M. A. Jones to Mr. DeLoach 7/2/65, "Congressman James Martin (R-Alabama)" reveals that on 7/1/65 Supervisor David W. Bowers called on the Congressman at the latter's request. Martin referred to the Report which he expected to obtain and wanted to know if he sent a copy to the FBI, would we confirm or deny the allegations in the Report concerning the communist influences in the civil rights movement. He was told that this would not be possible since information in FBI files is confidential. Concerning Martin, you will recall that on 6/3/65, we furnished to the White House and the Attorney General copies of news releases of a statement by Martin which concerned the exposure of Martin Luther King, Jr., by the President at such time as it is considered politically expedient.

ANALYSIS OF ALABAMA COMMISSION REPORT:

The Report is made up of several parts, some duplicating each other, all dealing generally with the subject of communist influences in the civil rights movement. One part is a June, 1964 Study by the Commission concerning the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Another part is a 3/11/64 Study entitled "The 1964 Civil Rights Bill...Its Pattern...Its Architects." The Report brands the civil rights movement as largely infiltrated and controlled by communist elements through the tracing of the communist backgrounds of key civil rights organizations and leaders. Much emphasis is placed on the communist associations of King, his organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, among others. The part concerning the National Council of Churches alleges communist involvement of that Council and the part concerning the 1964 Civil Rights Bill attempts to portray that legislation as following the Communist Party line. The Report goes so far as to state the Bill "was copied from the Communist Party platform of 1928."

Enclosure sent 7-17-65

100-442529

SFP: deh (9)

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AUG 16 1965

XEROX

RECORDED COPY FILED IN 62-117501

Memorandum to Mr. Sullivan
Re: Communis Influence in Racial Matters
100-442529

There are no facts in the Report new to the Bureau concerning communism in the civil rights movement. The Report makes much use of statements by the Director such as those before the House Subcommittee on Appropriations, the Bureau-published summary of information of 9/18/64 concerning riots in the Summer of 1964, and other published statements of the Director. A gross inaccuracy in quoting the Director is noted on Page 25 where it is stated "J. Edgar Hoover said in his report to Congress last year that many of the persons in clerical garb who took part in the march on Washington were identified by the FBI as Communist Party members." The Director has never made such a statement. The Report is replete with generalizations, conclusions and editorializing and is inadequately documented.

OBSERVATIONS:

The Report is obviously a "political football" begging to be kicked around. While factual in many respects, we certainly do not necessarily subscribe to the many conclusions and generalizations drawn. The fact that Congressman Martin has already solicited our views is an indication of an attempt to draw the FBI into this matter which we should definitely avoid. We believe that our reply to the Attorney General should point out that while it appears to contain no new facts, it does contain much by the way of conclusion to which we do not necessarily subscribe. The Attorney General should be advised of Martin's solicitation of our views and our "FBI files are confidential" reply to Martin, as well as the information we furnished the Attorney General 6/3/65 concerning Martin's statement about the President's exposure of King when politically expedient.

As to the gross inaccuracy of the reported statement by the Director alleging many Communist Party members in clerical garb, we have considered setting the record straight with the Alabama Commission but believe it unwise for two reasons: (1) our correction of any portion of the Report could well be interpreted as an agreement with the remainder; and (2) it would draw us directly into the "political football game." Either of these two strong probabilities would be highly undesirable. We believe that the Attorney General should also be advised of our thinking concerning the inaccuracy so that he would also be less inclined to be drawn into a position which could backfire for the Bureau as well as the Department.

RECOMMENDATION:

Attached for approval is a letter to the Attorney General in line with the above observations.